

organize resources

Overview

Organizing resources to consider historic properties and cultural resources in the hazard mitigation planning process involves identifying and assembling the necessary technical information, funding, staff, and political and public support. The process cannot progress—much less succeed—without the marshaling of these resources.

The three steps discussed in this section to integrate historic properties and cultural resources into the hazard mitigation plan supplement the guidance provided in FEMA 386-1, *Getting Started: Building Support for Mitigation Planning*. These steps are described below:

- Step 1.** This step entails assessing the level of awareness and support for protecting these assets. This step also involves identifying resources for hazard mitigation related to historic properties and cultural resources.
- Step 2.** This step focuses on identifying and recruiting historic preservation and cultural resource experts to join the planning team, should such expertise not already be represented by the core planning team members.
- Step 3.** This section offers advice and provides useful tips on how to effectively engage the public during key points in the hazard mitigation planning process.

At the completion of this phase, you should have a clear sense of the community's level of support for historic preservation. In addition, you should have identified available sources of information, team members should have been recruited, and a public outreach campaign should have been developed.





National Register of Historic Places

With the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966, the National Register became the Federal government's official list of historic properties that have met certain evaluation criteria (see Criteria for Evaluation in Appendix A – Glossary) and are legally recognized as historically significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Both Federal and State agencies are involved in the maintenance and expansion of the National Register, which is administered by the Secretary of the Interior under authority of Section 101(a)(1)(A) of the NHPA and the National Park Service (NPS). Properties are usually listed through a process managed by State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs). Typically, these properties are at least 50 years old and demonstrate a degree of integrity of historic materials sufficient to convey important historic information.

In its broadest sense, the National Register is a planning tool that highlights the importance of properties worthy of preservation due to their local, State, Tribal, or national significance. The listing currently contains information on more than 77,000 formally listed properties.

Many types of properties can be considered historic. These include:

- Buildings—including residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural constructs;
- Structures—such as dams, bridges, canals, tunnels, or bandstands;
- Objects—such as signs, monuments, markers, or statuary;
- Sites—such as gardens, estate grounds, battlefields, landscapes, and archeological sites; and
- Districts—such as neighborhoods, commercial areas, or college campuses. Sometimes a listing is made for a grouping of buildings that lack individual distinction but together have been judged to be significant.

Step 1. Assess Community Support

Before proceeding with Step 1, it is important for your planning team to first develop a broad definition of historic properties and cultural resources. As the planning effort includes input from a broad cross-section of community members, varying definitions for what constitutes a historic property/cultural resource may be encountered (see Appendix A – Glossary). Your planning team can refine the broad definition as you receive this input. Once agreement on the definition has been reached, it should form the basis for identifying the properties and resources that will be assessed in Phase 2.

As the planning team determines the readiness of the community to undertake the hazard mitigation planning process, it is important to assess the level of knowledge, support, and resources available for carrying out hazard mitigation efforts for historic properties and cultural resources. If it is determined that public officials and citizens do not consider it important to address historic properties and cultural resources in the hazard mitigation plan, then activities suggested in Step 1, Task C in FEMA 386-1, *Getting Started: Building Support for Mitigation Planning* should be reviewed in an effort to raise awareness and build support for overcoming obstacles.

Assessing Community Awareness of Historic Properties and Cultural Resources

The following questions can be used to determine the level of public support and awareness of historic properties and cultural resources in the community:

- How much do appointed or elected officials and citizens know about historic properties and cultural resources in hazard areas?
- Do officials and citizens understand that steps can be taken to reduce damage to historic properties and cultural resources from hazards?
- Is there a difference between the perceived risk by the community and the actual risk to historic properties and cultural resources in the event of a disaster?
- Do elected and appointed officials understand how local, State, and Federal levels each support the protection of historic properties and cultural resources?



- Who in the community will be affected by the mitigation actions implemented to protect historic properties and cultural resources?
- Which members of the community will most benefit from mitigation actions?
- Who in the community may resist and why?
- Is there a historic preservation office or department in your community? Is there staff with historic preservation capabilities with whom you can collaborate?
- Is there an existing historic preservation plan in the community, State, or Tribe?
- If there is a comprehensive plan, does it contain a historic preservation or conservation element?

The following methods can be used to obtain answers to these key questions:

- Conduct interviews with local officials and citizens;
- Examine local newspapers;
- Participate in community meetings;
- Visit local historical societies, museums, and architectural review boards; and
- Develop and distribute questionnaires/surveys.

In addition, if a community contains a locally designated historic district or one that is listed in the National Register, it is more likely than not that many residents will already be conversant with preservation issues and appreciate the importance of protecting historic properties and cultural resources from disasters. In such areas, local historical societies, neighborhood groups, and individual advocates may already be promoting the preservation of historic properties.



Significant historic properties sometimes have a simple design, such as this typical frontier school house built in 1910 in South Pass City, Fremont County, Wyoming.

Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, HABS WYO, 7-SOPAC, 19-9 and 19-6



Properties Less Than 50 Years Old

While properties in the National Register are typically 50 years old or older, those properties that are less than 50 years old will qualify if they are integral parts of historic districts that do qualify or they fall into certain special categories. For a description of these categories, see National Register Bulletin #15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.





State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)

In cooperation with Federal agencies, SHPOs are responsible for directing and conducting a comprehensive statewide survey of historic properties and maintaining inventories of such properties under Section 101(b)(3) of the NHPA. These State officials maintain important information on historic properties in inventories and in statewide historic preservation plans, and are required to have qualified preservation professionals on staff. Federal agencies are directed in Section 110 of the NHPA to cooperate with SHPOs in establishing programs to locate, inventory, and nominate historic properties to the National Register. A State historic preservation office typically will have a designated SHPO and a deputy SHPO, and will likely have a support staff comprising archeologists, historians, planners, architects, and archivists. The structure of a preservation office differs from State to State and Tribe to Tribe.

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO)

A THPO is the Tribal equivalent of a State Historic Preservation Officer. The THPO may assume a role parallel to that of State government in administering the national historic preservation program on Tribal lands. Tribes will tailor their programs to accommodate Tribal values and address Tribal priorities. The 1992 Amendments to the NHPA recognized the Tribes' growing capabilities in historic preservation and the Tribes' rightful place in the national program. Specifically, the 1992 Amendments provide for Tribes, at their request, to assume responsibilities for such functions as identifying and maintaining inventories of culturally significant properties, nominating properties to the National Register, conducting Section 106 review of Federal agency projects on Tribal lands, and administering educational programs on the importance of preserving historic properties.

Resources Available for Hazard Mitigation

Many resources are available for the preservation and protection of historic properties and cultural resources. Enlisting the aid of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) at the start of the hazard mitigation planning process will be invaluable for identifying available resources, and for determining which agencies or individuals may have the capabilities to implement mitigation actions, provide funding, etc. The following section focuses on three key sources to consult to obtain more information on available resources: SHPO/THPOs, archivists or collections managers, and planners.

- **SHPO/THPOs.** Section 106 of NHPA requires the SHPO/THPO to provide comment and to be consulted with on federally funded undertakings—including local actions using Federal funds or requiring Federal approval—that may affect historic properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register (please see Appendix A – Glossary and Appendix B – Library for more information on SHPO/THPO responsibilities). SHPOs and THPOs generally maintain lists or databases of significant historic properties and cultural resources.

It is important for your team to establish and maintain an open line of communication with the SHPO/THPO, especially if the planning area includes Tribal lands or areas historically associated with Native American groups. SHPO/THPO office staff may be able to help your team identify nearby communities that have faced similar challenges in incorporating historic property and cultural resource considerations into hazard mitigation plans.

It is a good idea to contact your SHPO/THPO directly at the start of the hazard mitigation planning process. When doing so, you should provide a brief description of your planning project and any known historic properties in the community. Although the SHPO/THPO may respond directly, he or she most likely will delegate this task to the staff member most familiar with your community's needs. This staff member will be the primary contact throughout the hazard mitigation planning process.

Do not be surprised if the SHPO/THPO does not respond instantly. Many, if not most, SHPO/THPO offices are understaffed and under-budgeted, with many other



communities and projects demanding their attention. It is not uncommon to wait one month or longer before receiving a response to initial formal inquiries.

- **Archivist or collections manager at the local museum.** Over the past decade, cultural institutions have made great strides in developing disaster preparedness plans. These documents will assist in understanding the range and scope of cultural resource assets in the affected area, and will ensure that the initial inventory includes special collections.
- **Planners at local or regional planning offices.** The local or regional planning office is a good source of information on historic properties that have been surveyed or designated as historic at the local level. If your community is a Certified Local Government (CLG), it should be the repository for local survey data. Also, historic properties and cultural resources may be identified in the preservation element of the local comprehensive plan or capital improvement plan. Local or regional transportation departments and planning associations may also have previously identified historic



Historic Preservation Element in Comprehensive Plans

Comprehensive plans provide a framework for regulating the built environment. State regulations define the elements that a plan must contain. These elements typically include:

- Future land use element;
- Housing element;
- Economic development element;
- Capital improvement element;
- Transportation element; and
- Conservation element.

The policies in the comprehensive plan are intended to minimize incompatible use, avoid urban sprawl, provide for adequate infrastructure facilities, prevent damage or disruption to natural resources, and preserve the character of the community. These policies and their related goals and objectives provide a vision for the community's future. The conservation element typically encompasses the protection of natural resources as well as historic properties and cultural resources. This element includes an analysis of the effects of future land use on historic properties and cultural resources and policies, goals, and objectives for preserving these resources. This element will also discuss local mechanisms such as Historic Preservation Commissions that designate and protect historic properties and cultural resources under jurisdictional zoning authority.



See Appendix A

The Glossary contains more information on the following major pieces of legislation that affect historic preservation initiatives:

- The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), particularly Section 106 and
- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



Historic Property and Cultural Resource Survey

A process by which historic properties and cultural resources that are potentially significant to the community are documented. Typically a survey involves the collection of documentary photography and completion of survey forms to describe each property or resource. This description includes its landscape (if a property), construction materials, geographic location, and potential significance (see sample survey on page 2-15 and Step 3 in Phase 2 for more details on conducting a survey).



Cultural Resource Inventories

Counties (e.g., in Florida) sometimes have a county-wide cultural resources inventory, which also resides with the SHPO's office, that may include vulnerability determinations and preservation recommendations. SHPOs may also have grant funding available to undertake these types of broad surveys.

properties and cultural resources. If a community has already identified priorities for future preservation, hazard mitigation planning can be integrated into existing and ongoing preservation planning efforts.



Certified Local Governments

Local governments strengthen their local historic preservation efforts by achieving Certified Local Government (CLG) status from the NPS. NPS and State governments, through their SHPOs, provide technical assistance and small matching grants to these communities. In turn, NPS and States gain the benefit of local government partnership in the national historic preservation program. Another incentive for participating in the CLG program is the pool of matching grant funds SHPOs set aside to fund CLG historic preservation subgrant projects—at least 10% of the State's annual Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant allocation. Grant funds are distributed through the HPF grant program, administered by NPS and SHPOs.

Projects eligible for funding and the criteria used to select them are developed annually by the SHPO. Funding decisions are made by the State, not NPS. Among the kinds of activities funded are the following: architectural, historical, and archeological surveys; oral histories; nominations to the National Register; staff work for historic preservation commissions; design guidelines and preservation plans; public outreach materials such as publications, videos, exhibits, and brochures; training for commission members and staff; and rehabilitation or restoration of National Register listed properties.

Step 2. Build the Planning Team

Whether you have an established team or are in the process of forming one, it is important to assess the team members' expertise and capabilities to address historic properties and cultural resource considerations and fill in any gaps. Individuals or agencies to consider adding to your planning team include:

- State and regional agencies that plan for historic properties and cultural resources, including your SHPO and State archivist;
- Tribal representatives, including your THPO (as noted previously, it is important to identify Tribal nations that may have an important historical relationship with your planning area);
- State, regional, and local historical societies;
- Historic preservation planners knowledgeable about Federal and State preservation legislation, local ordinances, and possible funding sources;



- Preservation architects and other professionals who specialize in the rehabilitation and restoration of historic structures;
- Professional and amateur archeologists and/or archeology departments of universities and colleges in your region;
- Local museums, libraries, archives, and repositories of collections, art, books, and artifacts;
- Non-profit historic preservation organizations and historic neighborhood organizations;
- Businesses and development organizations for historic commercial districts and “Main Street” programs; and
- Federal government agencies, such as FEMA, the National Park Service (NPS), and the National Archives.



Preservation Task Force

If substantial community support and interest is shown for protecting local historic properties and cultural resources, your planning team may wish to establish a dedicated historic and cultural resource preservation task force or committee. This task force or committee would be charged with reporting back to the larger hazard mitigation planning team.



Including Living Ties to the Past – Traditional Cultural Properties

Native American Tribal nations and other ethnic or social groups, even from a great distance, may feel a strong cultural connection with certain historic properties and cultural resources, including what are known as Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs). TCPs are defined as historic properties that are eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of their association with the cultural practices or beliefs of a living community. These practices are rooted in that community’s history and are important in maintaining the continuity of traditional beliefs and practices—in essence, the cultural identity of the community.

Examples of places important to sustaining the traditional beliefs of a community might include “vision quest” sites important to Tribal groups of the northern plains, or sand bars along the Rio Grande River that help maintain ceremonial practices of the Sandia Indians. Other examples include urban neighborhoods that are the traditional home of a particular cultural group. For example, Honolulu’s Chinatown embodies the distinctive cultural value of the city’s Asian community in its architecture, landscaping, signage, and ornamentation.

Some communities may have several different histories and collections of historic properties and cultural resources; however, not all of these may be formally documented. Many social and ethnic groups may lack official published histories or historical societies, but nevertheless have a strong connection to specific resources. It is therefore important to make an additional effort to research and identify communities with alternative histories and to include these communities and their resources in the hazard mitigation planning process.



Mount Shasta, a sacred site to northern California Tribes.

Source: NSBO, <http://www.byways.org>



View of Devil’s Tower, near the Belle Fourche River in Wyoming, taken in 1888. This site is sacred to several Native American Tribes.

Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsc-02642

If these individuals or representatives from the listed agencies do not have time to join your team, then establish an ongoing dialogue with them throughout the planning process.

It is important to ensure that the assembled planning team includes interested citizens and local experts as well. It may be helpful to contact your SHPO for referrals of qualified individuals. An equitable and diverse representation on your planning team will enhance your planning efforts and help build community support for hazard mitigation.

Use **Worksheet #1: Expand the Planning Team** to identify others to invite to join your planning effort (see Appendix C for a blank worksheet).

Step 3. Engage the Public

There are several ways to obtain public input on the protection of historic properties and cultural resources during your hazard mitigation planning process. Frequently used methods include public meetings, questionnaires, and visual definition surveys. Public meetings are useful for educating the community on the overall hazard mitigation planning process, for identifying historic properties and cultural resources, for obtaining input on the various hazard mitigation alternatives available for protecting these resources, and for keeping the public up to date on the progress of your implementation efforts. For these reasons, your team should, at a minimum, develop a schedule for holding meetings at certain key stages in the hazard mitigation planning process. These key stages are:

- At the beginning of the planning process to inform the public of your planning efforts and to hear about what historic properties and cultural resources are important to the community;
- At the conclusion of the risk assessment to report on your findings;
- When developing your goals and discussing alternative mitigation actions for your mitigation strategy; and
- As you implement the plan to inform the public of progress made to date.



Public Participation

A carefully designed public participation process can often ensure that critical information about certain types of historic properties and cultural resources reaches the project team. For example, in many communities across the United States, selecting members of the project team who are fluent in Spanish is a basic but important step that influences the success of the information gathering process. This is true because many cultures place emphasis on teaching about the importance of certain types of historic properties and cultural resources through oral history and tradition, rather than relying upon traditional written source materials. This transmission of cultural information often occurs through that community's native language, which may not be English. Without a critical ear attuned to this different mode of communication, the information gathering process may result in an incomplete, narrowly drawn picture of the heritage of all groups within a given geographic area, which in turn diminishes your hazard mitigation plan being actively embraced and used by the community as a whole.



Meetings could be held in conjunction with open gatherings of historical societies and historic preservation groups, neighborhood and social or ethnic organizations, or planning advisory groups or municipal governments. If residents are invited to participate in the process early on and to recount local history on their terms, there is a better chance that implementation of the plan will succeed. Local input is especially important for the valuation of local resources; even when a local structure is not eligible for listing in the National Register, it may still be very important to the community.

If controversy is expected, it may be advisable to hold the public meeting at a neutral location, such as a church hall, using a trained facilitator. For increased credibility, all public meetings (whether controversial or not) should be advertised (consider using stakeholders, creating posters for display, and contacting media sources as options for advertising the meetings).



San Francisco 1906 earthquake and fire, April 18-21.

Source: NOAA/NGDC

Dramatic Graphics as a Powerful Tool for Public Outreach

Presenting graphic material from past disaster events can help members of a community visualize the potential impacts that a modern-day disaster may have on its historic properties and cultural resources.



Whose History Is It Anyway?

Deciphering the importance of historic properties and cultural resources can sometimes be a difficult and daunting task, and must be approached with caution and sensitivity. Part of this difficulty comes from one's own cultural perspective, or "world view." Like a tinted lens in a pair of glasses, this process can result in seeing people only from the point of view of one's own culture. Commonly called ethnocentrism, this misperception can result in a dominant cultural group completely looking past what is critically important to another cultural group. For example, in the American Southwest, simple memorials such as roadside crosses within Hispanic communities may not be perceived by those outside the Hispanic community as anything of importance, and certainly nothing worth preserving. But these objects, called "descansos" (literally "places of rest") reflect the continuation of a tradition brought to the United States by Spanish colonists in the 17th century. Originally erected at places where a funeral procession paused to rest on the journey between church and cemetery, these memorials have become a symbol of interrupted journeys and deaths as a destination along our highways. To Hispanic community members, humble objects such as these often serve as tangible links to beliefs, customs, and practices that mark the existence of one or more living communities.

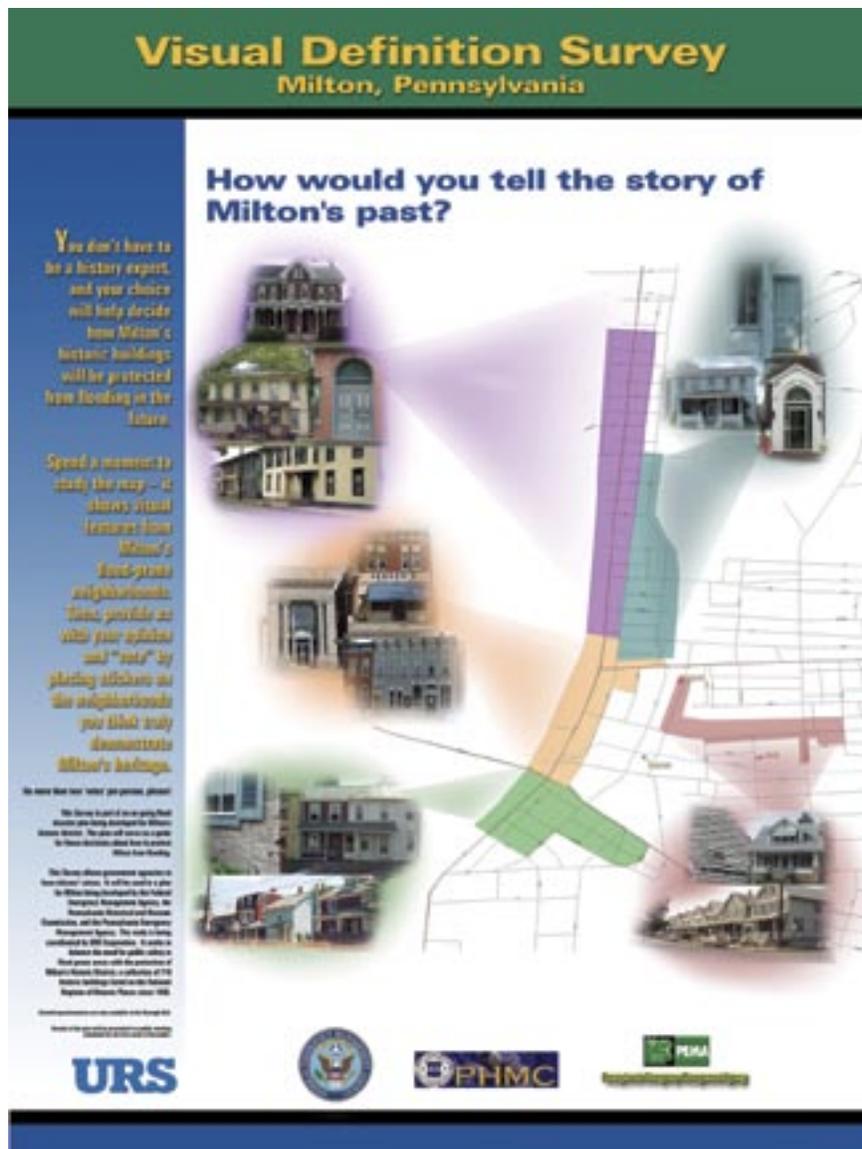
For more information, see "Introduction/Dios da y Dios quita" from *Descansos: An Interrupted Journey*, Rudolfo Anaya, Juan Estevan Arellano, and Denise Chavez (Del Norte, 1995).





An Inclusive Planning Process

Without early and frequent public participation, your hazard mitigation planning effort may provoke misunderstandings and objections from some community members. Although public meetings convened by your hazard mitigation planning team or historic preservation task force can provide a forum for public input, they may not be enough to bridge the gap. Consider other opportunities for public input—for example, engaging a local interest group in an open-ended dialogue, attending open meetings of other organizations, or encouraging their members to attend an upcoming meeting of your hazard mitigation planning team. For community members who are unable to participate because of other commitments, outreach in the form of short postcards to solicit input, or a project Web site or poster board, may help them feel included in the hazard mitigation planning process.



Display poster used to solicit input from Milton residents.

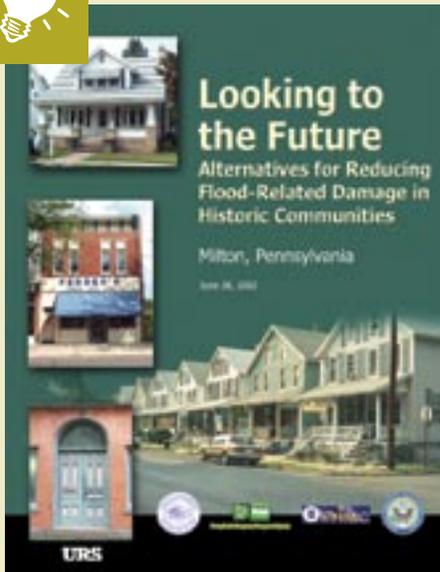
Source: *Looking to the Future, Alternatives for Reducing Flood-Related Damages in Historic Communities*, Milton, Pennsylvania, June 2002

Other methods for garnering public input on historic properties and cultural resources include the use of brief questionnaires and a Visual Definition Survey display poster (see example). In the Visual Definition Survey, residents “vote” using a multi-voting system (described in FEMA 386-3, *Developing the Mitigation Plan*, pp. 2-26 to 2-27) on the types and locations of historic properties and cultural resources they feel best demonstrate local history and contribute to a distinctive sense of place.





A Community Success Story



Source: *Looking to the Future, Alternatives for Reducing Flood-Related Damages in Historic Communities*, Milton, Pennsylvania, June 2002

The Borough of Milton, Pennsylvania, is a flood-prone community located on the Western Branch of the Susquehanna River. The Borough contains a large historic district that has endured a long history of repetitive flooding. To reduce long-term damage from flooding events, the Borough considered acquisition and demolition of some of the district's oldest structures. Although many citizens remembered the devastation brought on by past flooding, they also remembered the unfortunate wound inflicted on their community by the demolition of over 400 buildings—many of them historic—following the 1972 flood.

To address flooding while adopting a preservationist approach, the Borough of Milton worked with concerned citizens, preservation advocates, a regional planner, and representatives from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (SHPO) on the development of a community-based hazard mitigation planning process that actively incorporated information about historic properties. Working with FEMA, a team of historians, a preservation architect, and a hazard mitigation planner, the Borough organized and sponsored a series of public meetings to identify and focus on broad, common goals for mitigation actions that will result in improved protection of the Borough's historic properties.

More information on Milton's planning process for historic flood-prone properties is online at <http://www.fema.gov/ehp/milton.shtm>.

Summary

By the end of Phase 1, you should have collected readily available information on existing efforts to protect historic properties and cultural resources, building your understanding of the level of support that exists in your community for protecting these assets. You will also have established a balanced planning team comprised of members with cultural resources expertise and knowledge of the planning area. In addition, you should have identified a variety of approaches for engaging the public in the planning process. Relationships formed at this stage of the planning process will be valuable throughout the creation and implementation of the hazard mitigation plan.

In Phase 2, your team will identify hazards that affect local historic properties and cultural resources, inventory those properties and resources, and create a method for deciding which resources are preservation priorities. It will also assess the vulnerability of these assets and estimate the associated amount of potential loss.

This is the end of Phase 1. Before proceeding to Phase 2, please take a moment to answer the following questions to determine if you have adequately assessed the resources needed to move



forward with integrating historic property and cultural resource considerations into the hazard mitigation plan. These are followed by a Review Test that you should use as a learning aid to better understand the topics covered in Phase 1.

Evaluate Your Community

- What are the obstacles to historic properties and cultural resource preservation in your community? How will you overcome them?
- Are there any gaps in the range of interests and expertise represented on your planning team? If so, who will be added to your team to fill those gaps?
- What additional outreach is needed to inform the public about your planning efforts to integrate historic properties and cultural resources in your hazard mitigation plan?

Review Test (Select one answer for each question.)

1. What types of resources may be considered historic?
 - a. Buildings such as houses, schools, churches, and factories.
 - b. Cemeteries, battlefields, and gardens.
 - c. Bridges, dams, and canals.
 - d. All of the above.
2. A State Historic Preservation Officer is:
 - a. A State archivist or records manager.
 - b. A person designated by the Governor of each State who is responsible for carrying out historic preservation programs under State and Federal law.
 - c. Responsible for protecting historic properties in State parks.
 - d. All of the above.
3. A Tribal Historic Preservation Officer is:
 - a. Equivalent of a SHPO, but responsible for historic properties and cultural resources on Tribal lands.
 - b. A resource that can help you develop information regarding traditional cultural properties.



- c. A person who can help you understand the distinctions between generally recognized historic properties and properties of importance to Native American or Indian communities.
 - d. All of the above.
4. Early and active input from the public is needed to:
- a. Gain support for historic preservation and address community concerns and misconceptions.
 - b. Determine the best time of year to undertake renovations.
 - c. Find someone who knows what a SHPO is.
 - d. None of the above.

(Answers in Appendix D – Answers to Review Tests.)





phase 2